

1 concerns as well as a continued homogenization of
2 our news and entertainment environment.
3 Something we're already experiencing.

4 Thomas Jefferson was right when he
5 said, "Our liberty depends on freedom of the
6 press, and that cannot be limited without being
7 lost."

8 As the FCC considers any changes to
9 limit our media ownership, I hope that you will
10 remember our founding fathers who fought for an
11 independent press to protect our democracy. I
12 hope it will also remember we Pacific
13 Northwesterners who want our children and
14 grandchildren to enjoy the liberties Jefferson
15 promised would come to pass as a result of a free
16 press.

17 And to those who think that the
18 glories of the Internet have removed the need for
19 rules against media consolidation, I would like
20 to harken to the thought of what hoses do. Hoses
21 can distribute water as a media can distribute
22 information. And we may have 20 more hoses than

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1 we did before with the evolution of the Internet,
2 but if the FCC unduly weakens these media
3 ownership rules, we may end with twenty hoses all
4 connected to the same spigot. And if we have
5 only one spigot of information, vital information
6 for democracy, it doesn't matter how many hoses
7 we have to distribute that information.

8 So I urge the FCC to maintain multiple
9 spigots of information, to maintain the strength
10 of democracy, which is at its core a diversified
11 press, and maintain these media ownership rules.
12 That's what my constituents want. That's what
13 America needs. I hope that will come to pass.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 CHAIRMAN MARTIN: We also have an
17 opening statement via DVD from Congressman Dave
18 Reichert.

19 CONGRESSMAN REICHERT: Good afternoon.
20 I'd like to welcome the FCC commissioners and all
21 the attendees at today's hearing to Seattle,
22 Washington. I appreciate the opportunity to

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1 share a few words with you, and I regret the
2 Congressional schedule did not not allow me to be
3 with you today for this important discussion on
4 media ownership.

5 Relaxing restrictions on media
6 ownership is clearly not in the public interest.
7 It seems strange that we must create rules in
8 order to maintain diversity.

9 (Applause.)

10 CONGRESSMAN REICHERT: As Americans we
11 all know that the freedom is not free.

12 Our founding fathers had the foresight
13 to create a great foundation of democracy in this
14 country, and I'm proud to contribute my time
15 working to protect those freedoms.

16 American corporations create
17 opportunities for us, create jobs fueling the
18 economy and keeping our country competitive in
19 this globalized era, but when it comes to media
20 ownership, allowing these companies to simply
21 take over can have the adverse effect of limiting
22 information available to local consumers.

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1 Localism and diversity are the
2 cornerstones of our democratic society. Localism
3 enhances the public's informed participation in
4 our democracy, and diversity in the market
5 reduces the risk that news will be censored or
6 slanted by a few controlling interests.

7 (Applause.)

8 CONGRESSMAN REICHERT: As the Supreme
9 Court states, "The purpose of the first amendment
10 is to preserve an uninhibited marketplace of
11 ideas in which truth will ultimately prevail."
12 And the right of the public to receive unbiased
13 access to news and ideas should not be abridged
14 by either Congress or by the FCC. It is
15 essential to the health of our democracy --

16 (Applause.)

17 CONGRESSMAN REICHERT: -- is
18 protected.

19 Today is the sixth and final public
20 forum being conducted by the FCC on media
21 ownership issues prior to a potential vote later
22 this year on new rules that will govern media

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1 consolidation. The rules adopted by the FCC will
2 have a tremendous impact on news coverage and a
3 variety of the information available to
4 communities across the United States. It is
5 fitting that in this final forum being held here
6 in Seattle, home to one of the largest remaining
7 family and locally owned newspapers in the
8 America, the Seattle Times --

9 (Applause.)

10 CONGRESSMAN REICHERT: -- power of
11 localism.

12 I thank the commissioners for holding
13 these forums. It is essential that the concerns
14 of the American public be considered before
15 making any changes to our current laws.

16 CHAIRMAN MARTIN: We also have with us
17 today the state auditor Brian Sonntag, who I
18 believe is right there. Thank you.

19 MR. SONNTAG: I want to thank you very
20 much. I've got to tell you this is awfully
21 encouraging to see so many people here tonight --
22 the short notice that has already been noted --

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1 here tonight for a public policy issue that is
2 this important. Thank you very, very much.

3 You know some things are just right or
4 wrong. And it's, it's a thrill for me to be here
5 to make just a few comments and share my two
6 minutes. I understand it's two minutes.

7 The Office of State Auditor is
8 established in the state constitution to make
9 sure state and local governments are good
10 stewards of taxpayer dollars. As a statewide
11 elected official I work directly for the citizens
12 of this state. Our fundamental and only
13 responsibility is accountability. We're the
14 public's window into government operations. I
15 regard the media's watchdog role in much the same
16 way, the public's eyes and ears on government
17 activities and actions.

18 My concern and the reason I'm here
19 today pivots on news and information provided by
20 the media as opposed to their entertainment
21 programming. I'm a strong believer that the
22 media has a social responsibility to present a

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1 fair, accurate, and comprehensive accounting of
2 the day's news.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. SONNTAG: The citizen's right to
5 information about their government is fundamental
6 to our constitutional rights, our freedoms, and
7 our democratic system of self-government. We
8 depend heavily on the media to provide
9 information that we need to fulfill our civic
10 obligations. In that context the free flow of
11 news and information to the public must be
12 protected and nurtured at all costs.

13 I remember well in the 1990s when the
14 subsidiary of a media conglomerate purchased a TV
15 station serving the Seattle-Tacoma market.
16 Within a year of the purchase the new owner had
17 closed the station's 60 member news department
18 and filled the hour-long news time with reruns of
19 "M*A*S*H."

20 Certainly I recognize economic
21 pressures and market forces exist in every
22 industry. The media business is no exception. I

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1 also know that ever advancing technology
2 continues to deliver information in new forms.
3 The challenges to the survival of independent
4 local broadcast stations as well as newspapers
5 are perhaps greater than ever.

6 In my opinion the FCC has a critical
7 responsibility through its rule making authority
8 to preserve diverse media ownerships in single
9 markets. It boils down to a basic question: Who
10 owns the airwaves?

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. SONNTAG: The public does.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. SONNTAG: There must be a price to
15 be paid for using the public airwaves. That
16 price should be vigorous competition among media
17 companies at the local level, particularly in
18 news coverage, thought, and opinion.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. SONNTAG: The FCC must ensure that
21 communities have diverse voices and as many of
22 them as possible. You must protect the public

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1 from the effects of further consolidation and
2 conglomeration. Independent local ownership must
3 be valued. I urge you to keep your current
4 cross-ownership limitations and promote, as the
5 governor said, that marketplace of ideas.

6 Thank you very much.

7 (Applause.)

8 CHAIRMAN MARTIN: Councilman Reagan
9 Dunn is also here with us today.

10 COUNCILMAN DUNN: Mr. Chairman, thank
11 you, and commissioners, thank you for being here
12 today and the opportunity to speak. Like the
13 speakers before me, I also oppose consolidation
14 of the media and support the local control of our
15 news sources.

16 My name is Reagan Dunn, and I'm one of
17 nine members of the King County Council, one of
18 them here today. We're the 13th largest county
19 in the United States, and I represent about
20 200,000 people in eight different cities, cities
21 each of whom have their own news sources and
22 newspapers.

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1 I'm here today to take a slightly
2 different tact and let you know that this is a
3 bipartisan issue. It's an issue that both
4 Republicans and Democrats support.

5 The Puget Sound region is filled with
6 smart and independent people. You know we're the
7 ones that created Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks.
8 We're an activist corner of the nation. And
9 we're folks who seek out a variety of information
10 in framing our beliefs and thoughts about the
11 issues. Especially issues involving our
12 democracy.

13 In looking at the issue of media
14 ownership from the local perspective, I must
15 start with the premise that more voices are
16 better than less.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN DUNN: Diverse voices are
19 better. Local voices are better.

20 We know that there is not one or two
21 or even three ways to look at an issue. There
22 are potentially hundreds, and trust me I hear

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1 them all, and I think you'll hear them all
2 tonight as well.

3 So we have countless sources of news
4 here, practically papers on every street corner,
5 blogs, and other telephone sources. Why would we
6 want to implement policies that could limit the
7 diversity of our media and risk losing many of
8 these viewpoints?

9 Information is central to our
10 democratic system of government. That's why
11 freedom of the press is contained in the first
12 amendment to the United States Constitution.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN DUNN: In this day and age
15 with the advent of Internet, media diversity
16 should be striving and our democracy growing
17 stronger.

18 You know we are a region full -- prone
19 to natural disasters. In my lifetime, we've had
20 major floods, windstorms. We've even had a
21 volcano go off not very far from here. And I
22 can't imagine having a multinational or a company

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1 based out of New York owning and distributing the
2 emergency media information. We as a people need
3 to respond.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN DUNN: I'm a Republican,
6 and I'm a capitalist, but some areas of a private
7 sector must be regulated.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILMAN DUNN: Freedom of
10 information is too important. We must be
11 proactive in protecting that fundamental freedom,
12 and so, Commission, the proposed rules on media
13 ownership are taking us in the wrong direction
14 both for this region and for our country, and I
15 urge you to reconsider.

16 (Applause.)

17 CHAIRMAN MARTIN: We also wanted to
18 welcome the president of the University of
19 Washington, Mark Emmert. I'm not sure if he's
20 here. If he's here.

21 Well, then Commissioner Copps, would
22 you like to make any opening remarks?

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1 COMMISSIONER COPPS: I would, thank
2 you.

3 (Applause.)

4 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Thank you. I
5 want to thank every person in this hall for being
6 here today. You had almost no notice. Many had
7 other things, like work, to do, and you had to do
8 a lot of rearranging to be here and some came
9 from afar by car and by bus. And you all are
10 here because you have something important to say,
11 and had we given decent notice, hundreds more
12 would have come.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Maybe we should
15 call this hearing indecent notice. And let's
16 hope and pray it's not followed by an indecent
17 proposal.

18 I know Seattle has important thoughts
19 to share because I've been here before, twice for
20 media ownership hearings: In March of 2003 right
21 before then Chairman of the FCC Michael Powell
22 shoved his near catastrophic rules through the

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1 Commission and again last November. Commissioner
2 Adelstein was here, too.

3 But tonight you have an opportunity to
4 tell some of the other Commissioners about what's
5 happening to media in Seattle. Make the most of
6 it because this the very last of the very few
7 field hearings sponsored by the FCC.

8 Thank you, Governor Gregoire, Attorney
9 General, Senator Cantwell for your statements.
10 Jonathan and I met with the Senator just a few
11 days ago before we left Washington and we saw
12 again how deeply committed she is on this issue.
13 Jay Inslee, thank you. He has been tireless and
14 eloquent. And Frank Blethen, what can I say?
15 He's got the public interest in his bones, and no
16 one and I mean no one in this country has done
17 more than Frank to spread the word and to right
18 the wrongs inflicted by the media consolidation
19 frenzy of the last decade.

20 (Applause.)

21 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Why in the world
22 when we see those harms everywhere around us --

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1 closed or downsized newsrooms; homogenized and
2 nationalized entertainment; people of color
3 denied the chance to own and operate stations;
4 women denied the same way; musicians, really good
5 musicians kept off the air by corporatized,
6 nationalized big media; the dumbing down of the
7 civic dialogue in which the future of our
8 democracy --

9 (Applause.)

10 COMMISSIONER COPPS: The list goes on
11 and on and on.

12 And the list of problems we have not
13 tackled at the FCC in anything approaching a
14 comprehensive manner goes similarly on and on and
15 on, so why the rush to change important ownership
16 rules before we tackle these other problems that
17 have been before us for so damn long?

18 (Applause.)

19 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Did you ever
20 notice the FCC is always ready to run the fast
21 break for big media, but it's the four-corner
22 stall when it comes to serving the public

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1 interest?

2 (Applause.)

3 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Well, mark my
4 words. It's fast break time again. It's time
5 we'll be told in the next week or two to let big
6 media get bigger still, probably by promoting
7 more cross-ownership deals between TV stations
8 and newspapers.

9 New research only confirms what most
10 of us have suspected all along. These sweetheart
11 newspaper-broadcast combinations lead to less
12 news and fewer voices in the market.

13 (Applause.)

14 COMMISSIONER COPPS: I don't like it
15 one little bit. And I don't think you do either.

16 You know a public opinion poll came
17 out last week, proves that your fellow citizens
18 don't like it either. Over 70 percent said that
19 consolidation has gone too far. And almost six
20 people in ten want Congress to actually pass a
21 law outlawing newspaper-television combinations
22 in local markets.

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1 (Applause.)

2 COMMISSIONER COPPS: And get this,
3 because you've seen it here tonight, the
4 percentage is almost exactly alike whether the
5 respondents are Republican, Democrat, or
6 Independent. It's a grass roots issue.

7 (Applause.)

8 COMMISSIONER COPPS: But big media is
9 running that consolidation ball down anyhow.
10 Imagine it's a basketball game, and there comes
11 the defender against big media's drive. He's a
12 person of color. He wants a chance to get that
13 media ball and to be a part of the action, but,
14 uh-oh, the big media player knocks him down.
15 Someone tries to call foul, but the FCC referee
16 is looking the other way, so no foul is called.

17 And the big media team continues its
18 drive with no minorities on. They're out of the
19 game. No room on big media's court for them.
20 But wait. Here comes the public interest's
21 guard. He's coming down that court. He's really
22 mad, big media is not playing fair. He's mad

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1 that the refs don't listen, that the other team
2 has players that didn't even pass the eligibility
3 rules. Oh, but wait a minute. There aren't any
4 eligibility rules. The eligibility rules, the
5 fairness rules, the certification rules, the
6 licensing rules, the public interest rules have
7 all been struck from the books by the
8 Commissioned referees. So the public interest's
9 guard, he gets knocked down, too. And the crowd
10 boos, but the game goes on. And big media has
11 the court to itself and guess who's about to
12 score again.

13 Sound familiar? So that's where we
14 are. The rush is on to encourage more media deals
15 and to start a new game, but without minorities
16 and women even able to get out on the court, they
17 won't be part of the new game. They won't have a
18 chance to engage in all these transactions.

19 And what happened to the poor public
20 interest's guard? Well, maybe he pulled himself
21 up off the floor and maybe he'll be able to try
22 again next season, but the problem is the

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1 championship game is being played right now.

2 You know I get what's going on, but I
3 don't get why we should let it happen.

4 (Applause.)

5 COMMISSIONER COPPS: You folks, you
6 folks and millions of others actually blocked big
7 media's fast break with Michael Powell -- who
8 incidentally has become a powerful big media deal
9 maker now -- right when he was ready to score.
10 Well, it's time my friends to stop big media's
11 fast break one more time. We don't need any bad
12 new ownership rules, not one. What we need to do
13 is to defeat any bad new ownership rules, but be
14 vigilant because with the oversight we have now
15 on Capitol Hill and with the issue bubbling again
16 at the grass roots, big media and its accomplices
17 may try to look a little bit less grasping this
18 time, maybe they'll even settle for only changing
19 one or two rules because they think they can get
20 away with that, but they shouldn't get away with
21 that.

22 (Applause.)

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1 COMMISSIONER COPPS: So I want bad new
2 rules to go down, and then I want to revisit the
3 bad old rules that got us in --

4 (Applause.)

5 COMMISSIONER COPPS: I want
6 opportunities for minorities and women to be part
7 of the action, not words, not promises, not
8 notices of inquiry, not a seat in the back of the
9 media bus, but rules before any media ownership
10 vote takes place.

11 And I want us -- And I want us to
12 address the many public interest recommendations
13 that have been mostly locked away at the bill
14 since -- at the commission since 2000 before we
15 vote on big media.

16 Here's the bottom line. We at the FCC
17 have no business, no business in the world
18 granting still more privileges to big media until
19 we have measures on the books to know that
20 broadcasters have to uphold their end of the
21 bargain they made when they got to be stewards of
22 the public airwaves.

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1 (Applause.)

2 COMMISSIONER COPPS: And if they don't
3 uphold that bargain, you know what I think we
4 should say? Goodbye license.

5 (Applause.)

6 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Say that with me
7 one time. Goodbye license.

8 And you know when I was in Seattle
9 before people asked me what they could do, and I
10 said, "Well, contact the FCC Commissioners,
11 contact members of Congress." And you did that,
12 and for the Congress part anyhow, it helped. And
13 I hope you'll do that again. But this time I
14 think we should raise the ante just a little bit.
15 Let's take it to top. Let's be heard this time
16 in the White House.

17 (Applause.)

18 COMMISSIONER COPPS: I frankly don't
19 know where the President is on this. He's got a
20 lot on his plate. But why not let him know that
21 you're involved on this issue, that you care, and
22 that you're watching? Maybe he doesn't know what

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1 a hot potato his Commission is playing with right
2 now, but don't stop there because right now a lot
3 of people in both parties want to be President of
4 the United States, so let's let them know that a
5 lot of Americans in red states as well as blue
6 are fed up with what's happened to our media.
7 Let them know that you're watching, that you
8 care, and that this issue counts when you're
9 getting ready to cast your vote.

10 (Applause.)

11 COMMISSIONER COPPS: Some of these
12 candidates have already spoken up forcefully.
13 You ought to thank them and tell them you're with
14 them and tell the other candidates what you think
15 and tell them what you want.

16 You know some of you may say, "Well,
17 if I'm going to write the President of the United
18 States, shouldn't it be about Iraq, or the lack
19 of health insurance for 45 million Americans, or
20 creating new jobs, or educating our kids, or
21 prying open the doors of equal opportunity?" But
22 think about it. Those are all important issues.

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1 If one of those issues happens to be individually
2 your number one issue and you don't think it's
3 going quite the way you'd like it to go, maybe
4 this issue of media ought to be your second most
5 important issue because that first issue is
6 funneled and filtered increasingly through big
7 media if it's lucky enough to get into the funnel
8 at all.

9 (Applause.)

10 COMMISSIONER COPPS: And if you think
11 that issue would benefit from a little more media
12 attention and little more diverse input and a
13 little more community input and competition, then
14 this is important enough for you to contact those
15 leaders.

16 You can be conservative or liberal,
17 Democrat or Republican, red state or blue state.
18 There's no litmus test for getting involved, but
19 get involved. Take it to the top. I think a
20 little more democracy in our media, a little more
21 of airwaves serving you, their owners, would be a
22 blessing for America. So media reform, take it

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1 to the top. All in favor, please say aye.

2 AUDIENCE: Aye. (Applause.)

3 COMMISSIONER ADELSTEIN: Thank you.

4 I'm Commissioner Adelstein. Thank you
5 so much for coming out. You look beautiful out
6 there tonight. 800 strong. You've got this room
7 filled up, but you know what? If you'd been
8 given a little bit more notice, you'd be hanging
9 from the rafters. You'd have this place filled
10 with thousands of people outside the hall.
11 That's the way it should be.

12 That's the way it should be because
13 you people care about this. You have the right
14 to have notice, and you weren't given the notice
15 you deserve. In my five years on the Commission
16 I've never heard of a chairman scheduling a
17 public meeting on such short notice without
18 consulting you or me or any of his colleagues or
19 the members of Congress. It's an outrage. This
20 is unprecedented.

21 (Applause.)

22 COMMISSIONER ADELSTEIN: But you

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1 didn't let it stop you. There's a lot of
2 temptations out there in Seattle on a Friday
3 night. I know that, but you know that the good
4 old time religion is right here. This is what
5 it's all about. This is our democracy at stake.
6 This is our country. This is our life as a
7 community. And you're here because you care, and
8 you made it happen. Thank you so much for being
9 here.

10 Now, in most cities you could get away
11 with slipping in quietly and slipping out
12 quietly. Usually for some reason local media
13 outlets that are owned by these big distant media
14 conglomerates - and they're itching to get
15 bigger. For some strange reason the local media
16 usually doesn't cover us when we come to town.
17 They don't give anybody advance notice. Could it
18 be they have a conflict of interest?

19 But not in Seattle. For those who say
20 that media ownership doesn't matter, that it's
21 all the same no matter who owns it, I have
22 evidence in point. It's Frank Blethen sitting

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